

Message Text

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COPENHAGEN 0363

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, DA, PFOR, PGOV, FO, MARR, NATO

SUBJECT: NEW GOVERNMENT IN THE FAEROE ISLANDS

REF: COPENHAGEN 313

SUMMARY: THE NEWLY-FORMED GOVERNMENT OF THE FAEROE ISLANDS
WILL BE HEADED ONCE AGAIN BY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PRIME
MINISTER ATLI DAM. THIS GOVERNMENT REPRESENTS, HOWEVER,
A TOTALLY NEW CONSTELLATION OF PARTIES, INCLUDING THE MOST
LEFTIST, THE REPUBLICAN PARTY. ALTHOUGH NO DRAMATIC
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CHANGES ARE FORESEEN, THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL TEND TO

BE SOMEWHAT MORE SEPARATIST AND ANTI-NATO THAN ITS
PREDECESSOR. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NEW FAEROESE GOVERNMENT IS A COALITION OF THREE
OF THE FOUR MAJOR FAEROESE PARTIES, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS,
THE REPUBLICANS AND THE PEOPLES PARTY, A TOTALLY NEW
POLITICAL CONSTELLATION. THE THREE PARTIES REPRESENT A
SOLID MAJORITY IN THE LAGTING (PARLIAMENT), 18 OF THE 26
SEATS. EACH PARTY HAS TWO MINISTERS IN THE GOVERNMENT,
WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PRIME MINISTER ATLI DAM
CONTINUING IN THAT POST. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE BEEN
POLITICALLY UNDER PRESSURE FROM ERLENDUR PATURSSON'S
LEFTIST REPUBLICAN PARTY (WHICH CONTAINS A COMMUNIST
MINORITY FACTION). DAM, REPORTEDLY, WANTED THE REPUBLICANS
INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT TO NEUTRALIZE THEM DURING THE COMING
FOUR-YEAR PERIOD WHEN FALLING FISH PRICES AND LESS
FAVORABLE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ARE ANTICIPATED.

2. FOR THOSE ONE OR TWO READERS WHO DO NOT FOLLOW FAEROESE
POLITICS DAILY, IT MAY BE WORTH MENTIONING THAT THE FOUR
MAJOR FAEROESE PARTIES ARE DIVIDED BOTH HORIZONTALLY
AND VERTICALLY WITH RESPECT TO THE TWO BASIC ISSUES IN
FAEROESE POLITICS. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS
ARE LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTIES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY WHILE
THE UNIONIST PARTY AND THE PEOPLES PARTY ARE TO THE RIGHT
OF CENTER. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE
UNIONIST PARTY TEND TO SUPPORT CONTINUED ASSOCIATION AND
COOPERATION WITH DENMARK WHILE THE REPUBLICANS AND THE
PEOPLES PARTY FAVOR INCREASED FAEROESE SELF-GOVERNMENT
AND EVENTUAL INDEPENDENCE. TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE THERE
ARE TWO SMALL MISNAMED PARTIES: THE HOME RULE PARTY,
WHICH DESPITE ITS TITLE IS SQUARELY IN THE MIDDLE OF BOTH
ISSUES; AND THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY WHICH IS EXTREMELY
CONSERVATIVE, RESEMBLING IN THAT RESPECT THE PEOPLES PARTY.

3. THE OUTGOING GOVERNMENT CONSISTED OF THE SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC, UNIONIST AND HOME RULE PARTIES, A COALITION,
IN SHORT, OF THOSE PARTIES MOST FAVORABLE TO CONTINUED
ASSOCIATION AND COOPERATION WITH DENMARK, THE NEW COALITION
(WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS) CONSISTS OF
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THE PREVIOUS OPPOSITION PARTIES. BY ITS NATURE THEREFORE,
THE COALITION WILL TEND TO FAVOR INCREASED FAEROESE
SELF-RULE, AND TO BE MORE CRITICAL OF POLICIES ASSOCIATED
WITH THE DANISH RELATIONSHIP, E.G., MEMBERSHIP IN NATO.

4. DESPITE THE WORRISOME TENDENCY SUGGESTED BY ITS
COMPOSITION, THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS NOT EXPECTED TO
MOVE DRAMATICALLY IN LOOSENING TIES WITH DENMARK. THE

DANISH GOVERNMENT HAS SUCCEEDED IN MAKING THE ISSUE OF INCREASED FAEROESE AUTONOMY ONE THAT IS DEPENDENT PRIMARILY ON THE FAEROESE' OWN ECONOMIC CAPACITY RATHER THAN THE MORE EMOTIONAL ONE OF POLITICAL OR CULTURAL SELF-DETERMINATION. (THE DANISH GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE FAEROES WITH AN ANNUAL SUBSIDY OF ROUGHLY 133 MILLION KRONER (\$24 MILLION), OR APPROXIMATELY 40 PERCENT OF THE FAEROESE GOVERNMENT BUDGET.) AS A CONSEQUENCE, WHILE ALL PARTIES, TO GREATER OR LESSER DEGREE, CONTINUE TO CAPITALIZE ON THEIR PROFESSED COMMITMENT TO SELF-GOVERNMENT OR INDEPENDENCE, THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT TOWARD THAT GOAL HAS BEEN EXTREMELY MEASURED. IN FACT, THE THREE PARTIES HAVE REPORTEDLY AGREED UPON A PROGRAM FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS WHICH SPECIFIES THAT NO CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE IN THE FUNDAMENTAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FAEROES AND METROPOLITAN DENMARK AS SET OUT IN THE 1948 HOME RULE ACT.

5. THAT ACT PERMITS, HOWEVER, THE ASSUMPTION OF PREROGATIVES BY THE FAEROESE THEMSELVES IN AGREEMENT WITH THE DANISH GOVERNMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THAT PROVISION, THE FAEROESE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO TAKE OVER THE POSTAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND COMMENCE NEGOTIATIONS LOOKING IN THE LONGER TERM TO FAEROESE ASSUMPTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AS WELL AS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FAEROESE BANK WITH THE POTENTIAL AUTHORITY TO ACT AS A NATIONAL BANK. ACCORDING TO A DANISH GOVERNMENT SOURCE, THE FIRST SHOULD CAUSE NO DIFFICULTY BUT THE OTHER TWO WILL REQUIRE LONG NEGOTIATION AND, EVENTUALLY, THE ADOPTION OF ENABLING ACTS BY THE DANISH FOLKETING.

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6. TWO MATTERS OF SOMEWHAT MORE DELICACY ARE THE NEW FAEROESE GOVERNMENT'S DECLARED INTENTION TO SEEK EXCLUSIVE CONTROL OF SUB-SURFACE RESOURCES, A MATTER RESERVED TO DENMARK IN THE 1948 ACT, AND TO ENLARGE THE RESTRICTED FISHING ZONES IN FAEROESE WATERS IN STEP WITH SIMILAR MOVES BY OTHER COUNTRIES. THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS REQUESTED OFFICIAL TALKS ON THESE QUESTIONS WITH THE DANISH GOVERNMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IN VIEW OF THE POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY IN DENMARK AT PRESENT, THESE TALKS WILL BE DELAYED UNTIL AT LEAST APRIL OR MAY. AT THAT TIME THE DANISH GOVERNMENT INTENDS, ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY'S CONFIDENTIAL

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SOURCE, TO RESIST ANY CHANGES IN RESPECT TO THESE TWO MATTERS ON THE GROUNDS THAT BOTH WILL BE HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THE RESULTS OF THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO. TWO OF THE THREE PARTIES IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT ARE ANTI-NATO, PATURSSON'S REPUBLICANS AND THE PEOPLES PARTY. THEY HAVE INSERTED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM A REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT A MAJORITY OF ITS MEMBERS SUPPORT THE LAGTING RESOLUTION OF AUGUST 19, 1970 (A RESOLUTION WHICH REQUESTED THE FAEROESE GOVERNMENT OF THE TIME:

"TO INFORM THE DANISH GOVERNMENT THAT...IT IS THE VIEW OF THE LAGTING THAT THE FAEROE ISLANDS SHOULD BE KEPT OUTSIDE CONFLICTS BETWEEN COUNTRIES AND MILITARY ALLIANCES AND THAT THE LAGTING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAGTING CASE NO. 14 OF 1960, PROTESTED AGAINST

THE STATIONING OF SOLDIERS AT THE RADAR STATION
AT SODNFELLI AND THE LORAN STATION AT EJDE AND
REFUSES PERMISSION FOR STORING WAR MATERIEL ON
FAEROESE LAND OR SEA TERRITORY.")

8. INSERTION OF THIS REFERENCE IN THE PROGRAM MAY BE
MERELY A MEANS OF RESERVING THE POSITION OF THE
TWO PARTIES, IMPLYING THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED
TO LEAVE THE NATO ISSUE DORMANT DURING THE COMING FOUR
YEARS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FACT THAT A MAJORITY OF
THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS ANTI-NATO UNDOUBTEDLY CREATES A MORE
DELICATE SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE NATO
FACILITIES PRESENTLY SITUATED IN THE FAEROES.
PRIMIN DAM IS RETAINING RESPONSIBILITY FOR RELATIONSHIPS
WITH DENMARK - WHICH INCLUDES ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING
NATO AND EC RELATIONS - IN HIS OWN HANDS. SHOULD, HOWEVER,
NATO'S USE OF FAEROESE TERRITORY BECOME AN ISSUE, BY
REASON OF EXTERNAL STIMULI FOR EXAMPLE, DAM COULD WELL BE
SEVERELY PRESSED BY HIS MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES. ULTIMATELY,
DENMARK RETAINS THE FINAL RESPONSIBILITY, SINCE FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE MATTERS ARE RESERVED TO THE DANISH
GOVERNMENT IN THE 1948 ACT.

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